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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: ERADICATION OF POVERTY

## Report of the Second Committee (Part VII)*

Rapporteur: Ms. Silvia Cristina CORADO-CUEVAS (Guatemala)

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 96 (see A/51/604, para. 2). Action on sub-item (f) was taken at the 32nd and 37th meetings, on 11 November and 2 December 1996. An account of the Committee's consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/51/SR.32 and 37).

## II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS A/C.2/51/L.18 AND L.51

2. At the 32nd meeting, on 11 November, the representative of Costa Rica, on behalf of the States Members that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/51/L.18) entitled "First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty", which read:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 48/183 of 21 December 1993, 49/110 of 19 December 1994 and 50/107 of 20 December 1995 related to the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and proclamation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, and all

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in several parts, under the symbol A/51/604 and addenda.

other relevant resolutions relating to international cooperation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries,

"Recognizing that the international community, at the highest political level, has already reached a consensus on and committed itself to the eradication of poverty through declarations and programmes of action of the United Nations major conferences and summits organized since 1990, particularly the World Summit for Social Development,

"Expressing serious concern that more than 1.3 billion people in the world live in absolute poverty, especially in developing countries, and that the number of such people continues to increase every year,

"Welcoming the formulation of direct programmes of poverty eradication by some developing countries at the national level,

"Noting the activities carried out by countries and organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as by organizations, associations, institutions and entities of civil society, within the framework of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty,

"Noting also the action to be taken within the framework of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006),

"Recognizing that the mid-term review and appraisal of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[1] and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[2] to be conducted in the year 2000, will contribute to enhancing, at the international and national levels, action for the eradication of poverty in the world,

"Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General on the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and proclamation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty[3] and on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development,[4]

"Taking note of the agreed conclusions on coordination of the United Nations system activities for poverty eradication, adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996,[5] as well as of the

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[1] Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (A/CONF.166/9), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] A/51/443.

[4] A/51/348.

[5] A/51/3 (Part I), chap. III, para. 2.

outcome of the sessions of relevant functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 1996,

"1. Expresses its solidarity with people living in poverty in all countries and regions that are suffering severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, employment, credit, income and information;

"2. Decides that the theme for the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty shall be 'Eradicating poverty is an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind', and decides to adopt the logo for the Decade as proposed in the report of the Secretary-General;[6]

"3. Decides also that within the context of overall action for the eradication of poverty, special focus should be given to issues that reflect the multidimensional nature of poverty, such as environment, food security, population and migration, health, shelter, human resources development, fresh water, including clean water and sanitation, rural development, productive employment, the situation of vulnerable groups and social integration and therefore decides that the themes for 1997 and 1998 shall be 'Poverty and environment' and 'Poverty and food security', respectively; the themes for the remaining years of the Decade will be decided every two years commencing, in 1998, at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly;

"4. Decides further that the objective of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty is to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation in implementing fully and effectively all agreements, commitments and recommendations of United Nations major conferences and summits organized since 1990, particularly those related to poverty eradication;

"5. Stresses that international cooperation and assistance are essential to supporting the efforts of developing countries, particularly African countries and least developed countries, to meet the goal of eradicating poverty and stresses at the same time, that, at the request of Governments, the United Nations system should provide technical assistance in further developing and sustaining national capacity to gather and analyse information and to develop indicators for poverty analysis;

"6. Stresses also that the United Nations system should promote gender analysis in the integration of gender concerns into the planning and implementation of policies, strategies, and programmes on poverty eradication;

"7. Stresses further that during the Decade and beyond, people living in poverty and their organizations should be empowered by being fully

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[6] A/51/443, para. 53 (a) and (b).

involved in the setting of targets and in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of national strategies, activities and programmes for poverty eradication and the development of community bases, ensuring that such programmes reflect their priorities;

"8. Invites donor countries and multilateral financial institutions to give high priority to the eradication of poverty in their assistance budgets and programmes, on either a bilateral or multilateral basis, and also invites the relevant funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system to support developing countries, particularly African countries and least developed countries, in their efforts to achieve the overall goal of eradicating poverty and ensuring basic social services, through, inter alia, the elaboration and implementation of anti-poverty programmes;

"9. Encourages developing countries, particularly African countries and least developed countries, to mobilize domestic and external resources for poverty eradication activities and programmes and to facilitate their full and effective implementation;

"10. Recognizes the need to increase the share of funding for social development programmes commensurate with the scope and scale of activities required to achieve the objectives and goals set out in commitment 2 of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and chapter 2 of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, relating to the eradication of poverty;

"11. Reaffirms, in this context, that developed countries should attain, as soon as possible, the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for overall official development assistance and ensure that, within that target, 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product is earmarked for the least developed countries;

"12. Reaffirms also that the international community, including multilateral financial institutions, should take further measures and initiatives to cancel and/or reduce external debt, as well as to facilitate the access of developing countries, particularly African countries and least developed countries, to international markets, in order to enable them to implement fully and effectively their national anti-poverty activities and programmes;

"13. Urges the international community to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to poverty eradication programmes in developing countries, particularly African countries and least developed countries, with a view to reducing the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries;

"14. Calls upon all States, particularly donor countries, to contribute substantially to the Trust Fund for the Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, which includes in its activities support for

activities related to the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty;

"15. Invites the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to extend, as part of the contribution of the Programme to the Decade, the effort launched in 1996 with the Poverty Strategies Initiative, in order to strengthen technical and financial assistance in the elaboration or formulation of direct programmes to eradicate poverty in developing countries, particularly African countries and least developed countries;

"16. Welcomes the initiative to convene the non-governmental Micro-Credit Summit in Washington, D.C., from 2 to 4 February 1997, and the support given by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme thereto, with a view to ensuring that one hundred million families, especially the women of those families, around the world, particularly in African countries and least developed countries, will receive credit for self-employment and other financial services by the year 2005 and, in this context, calls upon all Governments, the United Nations system and the relevant actors of civil society to participate in the Summit, so as to ensure the successful outcome of the initiative;

"17. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Secretariat entity entrusted with the task of the system-wide promotion, implementation and follow-up of activities and programmes of the Decade with adequate human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations to enable it to discharge fully and effectively its functions and responsibilities;

"18. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the reports to be prepared for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 give due attention to the issue of poverty eradication;

"19. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the overall assessment of the implementation of the programme for the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, including the amount of resources earmarked by funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and to report on the implementation of the present resolution - that report to include a section on the negative effects of unilateral actions on the situation of people living in poverty and programmes for their well-being, in targeted developing countries;

"20. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session an item entitled 'First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)'."

3. At the 37th meeting, on 2 December, the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, Mr. Kheireddine Ramoul (Algeria), introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/51/L.51),

submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.18.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.51 (see para. 7).

5. After the adoption of the draft resolution, the representative of the United States of America made a statement (see A/C.2/51/SR.37).

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.51, draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.18 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

## III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

7. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

### First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/183 of 21 December 1993, 49/110 of 19 December 1994 and 50/107 of 20 December 1995 related to the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and proclamation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, and all other relevant resolutions relating to international cooperation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries,

Recognizing that the international community, at the highest political level, has already reached a consensus on and committed itself to the eradication of poverty through declarations and programmes of action of the United Nations major conferences and summits organized since 1990, particularly the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women,

Expressing serious concern that more than 1.3 billion people in the world, a majority of whom are women, live in absolute poverty, especially in developing countries, and that the number of such people continues to increase,

Welcoming the formulation of direct programmes of poverty eradication by some developing countries at the national level,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General on the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and proclamation of the

first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty[7] and on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development,[8]

Recognizing that investment in human capital and domestic and international policies supportive of economic and social development are essential prerequisites for the eradication of poverty,

Noting the activities to eradicate poverty carried out by countries and organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and by organizations, associations, institutions and entities of civil society, within the framework of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, and the coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the results of the major United Nations conferences and summits organized since 1990 in the economic, social and related fields,

Noting also the action to be taken within the framework of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006),

Recalling its resolution 50/161 of 22 December 1995, in which it decided to hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development,[9] to consider further actions and initiatives, inter alia, towards the eradication of poverty in the world,

Taking note of the agreed conclusions on coordination of the United Nations system activities for poverty eradication, adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996,[10] as well as of the outcome of the sessions of relevant functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 1996,

1. Expresses its solidarity with people living in poverty in all countries and reaffirms that the satisfaction of basic human needs is an essential element of poverty eradication, those needs being closely interrelated and comprising nutrition, health, water and sanitation, education, employment, housing and participation in cultural and social life;

2. Also expresses its solidarity with those suffering from a lack of control over resources, including land, skills, knowledge, capital and social connections, and calls for particular actions to provide appropriate social services to enable vulnerable people and people living in poverty to improve their lives, to exercise their rights and to participate fully in all social,

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[7] A/51/443.

[8] A/51/348.

[9] See Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (A/CONF.166/9).

[10] A/51/3 (Part I), chap. III, para. 2.

economic and political activities and to contribute to social and economic development;

3. Decides that the theme for the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty shall be "Eradicating poverty is an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind", and decides to adopt the logo for the Decade as proposed in the report of the Secretary-General;[11]

4. Recommends that, within the context of overall action for the eradication of poverty, special attention should be given to the multidimensional nature of poverty and to the national and international framework conditions and policies that are conducive to its eradication, which should aim at the social and economic integration of people living in poverty and the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including the right to development;

5. Also recommends that the causes of poverty be addressed in the context of sectoral strategies such as those on environment, food security, population, migration, health, shelter, human resources development, fresh water, including clean water and sanitation, rural development and productive employment, and by addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups, all of which should aim at the social and economic integration of people living in poverty;

6. Decides that the themes for 1997 and 1998 shall be "Poverty, environment and development" and "Poverty, human rights and development", respectively; the themes for the remaining years of the Decade will be decided every two years, commencing in 1998, at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly;

7. Also decides that the objective of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty is to achieve the goal of eradicating absolute poverty, and reducing overall poverty substantially in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation in implementing fully and effectively all agreements, commitments and recommendations of United Nations major conferences and summits organized since 1990 as they relate to poverty eradication;

8. Invites all donors to give high priority to the eradication of poverty in their assistance budgets and programmes, on either a bilateral or multilateral basis, and also invites the relevant funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system to support developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, in their efforts to achieve the overall goal of eradicating poverty and ensuring basic social services, by supporting national efforts to formulate, coordinate, implement, monitor and assess integrated poverty strategies, including capacity-building, and by supporting efforts to empower people living in poverty;

9. Stresses that international cooperation and assistance are essential to supporting the efforts of developing countries, particularly African

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[11] A/51/443, paras. 53 (a) and (b).

countries and the least developed countries, to meet the goal of eradicating poverty, and stresses at the same time that, at the request of Governments, the United Nations system should provide technical assistance in further developing and sustaining national capacities to gather and analyse information and to develop indicators for poverty analysis;

10. Calls upon all Governments and the United Nations system, in particular the relevant funds, programmes and agencies, to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective and to use gender analysis as a tool for the integration of a gender dimension into the planning and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes on poverty eradication;

11. Stresses that during the Decade and beyond, people living in poverty and their organizations should be empowered by being fully involved in the setting of targets and in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of national strategies, activities and programmes for poverty eradication and the development of community bases, ensuring that such programmes reflect their priorities;

12. Encourages developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, to mobilize domestic and external resources for poverty eradication activities and programmes and to facilitate their full and effective implementation;

13. Recommends that all Governments formulate or strengthen integrated poverty eradication strategies and policies and implement national poverty eradication plans or programmes, in a participatory manner, to address the structural causes of poverty, encompassing action on the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels, and stresses that those plans or programmes should establish, within each national context, strategies and affordable time-bound goals and targets for the substantial reduction of overall poverty and the eradication of absolute poverty;

14. Recognizes the need to increase the share of funding for social development programmes, in particular, basic social programmes, commensurate with the scope and scale of the activities required to achieve the objectives and goals set out in commitment 2 of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[12] and chapter 2 of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[13] relating to the eradication of poverty;

15. Reaffirms, in this context, that developed countries should, as soon as possible, strive for the fulfilment of the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for overall official development assistance and, where agreed, within that target, earmark 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product for the least developed countries;

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[12] Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (A/CONF.166/9), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[13] Ibid., annex II.

16. Also reaffirms the agreement on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing country partners to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes, and notes with interest the consensus reached at Oslo on 25 April 1996 on this matter;

17. Welcomes the recent initiatives of the Bretton Woods institutions, including the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, and the ongoing process at the international level regarding debt relief, as appropriate, for developing countries, and calls upon the international community, including international financial institutions, to implement fully and effectively all initiatives that will contribute to a durable solution of the debt problems of developing countries, in particular African countries and the least developed countries, and thus support their efforts to eradicate poverty;

18. Reaffirms that the international community, including multilateral financial institutions, should consider further measures to facilitate the access of developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, to international markets, in order to enable them to implement fully and effectively their national anti-poverty activities and programmes;

19. Urges the international community to reduce, as appropriate, excessive military expenditures on and investments in arms production and acquisition, consistent with national security requirements, in order to increase resources for social and economic development, in particular to poverty eradication programmes in developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries;

20. Calls upon all States, particularly donor countries, to contribute substantially to the Trust Fund for the Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, established under the authority of the Secretary-General, which includes in its activities support for activities related to the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty;

21. Invites the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to continue, as a contribution, inter alia, to the Decade, the effort launched in 1996 with the Poverty Strategies Initiative, in order to strengthen assistance in the elaboration of national plans, programmes and strategies to eradicate poverty in developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, and calls upon all countries to contribute to the Initiative;

22. Welcomes the agreed conclusions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996 on the coordination of United Nations system activities for poverty eradication and calls for their full and effective implementation by organizations of the United Nations system;

23. Notes with interest the initiative to convene a micro-credit summit in Washington, D.C., from 2 to 4 February 1997, to focus on the importance of increasing access to micro-credit and related financial services for self-employment and income-generating activities for people living in poverty,

in particular women in developing countries, and calls upon all Governments, the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and the relevant actors of civil society to participate actively in the summit so as to contribute to its successful outcome and to support the development, implementation and management of micro-credit programmes in developing countries;

24. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Secretariat entity entrusted with the task of system-wide promotion and follow-up of activities and programmes of the Decade with adequate human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations to enable it to discharge fully and effectively its functions and responsibilities;

25. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the reports to be prepared for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 give due attention to the issue of poverty eradication;

26. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the overall assessment of the implementation of the programme for the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, taking into account progress being made in the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, including recommendations for possible actions and initiatives in relation to the Decade;

27. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session an item entitled "First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)".

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